

OLD-STYLE POISE EARNS WYCOMBE POINTS AT ILFORD

By "ARGUS"

Ilford 0

Wycombe Wanderers 2

THE Isthmian League gravy is really coming Wycombe's way. Six points out of a maximum eight—four of them gained on enemy territory—represents a real fillip to the new season. Better still was the convincing way the Wanderers "saw off" the Ilford youngsters in a hard, slogging game which by no standards could be called a classic.

A pock-marked bumpy pitch and an opposing team of glory-or-bust teenagers hardly seemed the sort of combination to produce the best from Wycombe Wanderers; but the visitors, in the first half at least, showed their most fluent and co-ordinated soccer so far.

There were flashes of the old buoyant confidence, even a touch of near-arrogance, about the way the stylish Wycombe attack toyed with the Ilford defence throughout the first half.

Ilford, handicapped by a leg injury to centre forward Moore, which kept him off the field for more than half the game, played heroic desperation football.

Two goals up after 50 minutes, both the fruits of Peter James headers, Wycombe soft-pedalled throughout the second half and allowed the tearaway Ilford forwards to rampage towards goal.

Imperturbable Ken Brown, making one of his infrequent appearances in the Wanderers' goal, looked very good indeed. If Ilford had used howitzers to bombard the Wycombe net one doubts whether they would have ruffled ice-cool Ken.

Another calm customer was

Gerald Free, whose poise and ball control bemused the Ilford defenders.

A word of praise, too, for wing halves Jim Truett and Ron Fryer. The old pop, snap and crackle was back again in the tackle.

Wycombe played brisk go-ahead football and really hammered the Ilford defence in the first half. The elusive Free, dodging his "shadow" schemed several dangerous movements.

MOST CUNNING

Another Wanderer to give Ilford nightmares was Paul Bates, operating smoothly at inside right. It was Bates who hit the home crossbar with the most cunning of headers before he was sent sprawling in the penalty area.

As Paul lay injured, the home crowd roared their disapproval of referee Mr. Bedford's penalty decision. Once again, penalty-specialist John Beck was called to do the necessary. A whirlwind shot from Beck looked booked for goal, but Cochran brought off a great save.

INEVITABLE

Wycombe's luck seemed dead out but after 35 minutes Free made the inevitable goal. He curled a lovely centre onto the head of James for an effort that even the fantastic Cochran could not reach.

James was again on the spot four minutes after the restart. This time he headed in an Atkins centre.

Apparently content with a 2-0 lead, Wanderers eased off and the game degenerated into a kick-and-rush infuriating affair which did justice to nobody.

WYCOMBE STAR IS TWO-GOAL JAMES

Ilford 0, Wycombe 2

CENTRE-FORWARD Peter James headed two fine goals for Wycombe and, apart from the tenacious display of Ilford goalkeeper Albert Cochran, this Isthmian League clash may be dismissed as a dull, wild-booting affair, writes COLIN BARR.

James, settling down well in his first big season of Soccer, positioned himself expertly to score in the 35th minute from Gerry Free's centre.

Four minutes after the interval James was again standing near the centre of the goalmouth when a Dennis Atkins pass sailed over. He calmly headed past the diving Cochran.

But credit Cochran with a superb display. He was in action soon after the kick-off, tipping aside Trott's header. Then, in a goal-mouth melee, both James and Atkins saw their shots cleared by finger-tip saves.

Ilford were reduced to 10 men when their leader, Ron Moore, was helped off. He returned for a few minutes after the interval, but for most of the match Wycombe were facing a depleted side.

Wycombe right back John Beck must still be wondering how Cochran saved his powerful penalty, awarded for a foul on Bates, after 24 minutes.

Cochrane fisted the ball out, James raced in to kick the rebound—but the goalkeeper turned that aside with a cat-like leap.

Ken Brown, the Wycombe goalkeeper, must have spent the quietest second half of his career.

Ilford, who lost a number of their star players at the start of the season, are rebuilding a new side fast. But they need an experienced player of the Paul Bates calibre to help mould them into a fighting team.